

ITEM CUSTOMIZATION AND WEBSITE CUSTOMIZATION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority from application Ser. No. 61/140,256, filed Dec. 23, 2008, the entire contents of which are herewith incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Our previous application, publication number 20050177428 describes an embodiment which uses both a real item and a virtual item on a website; where the real item and the virtual item look similar to one another. In this application, a tangible item is packaged with a code, and that code is later used to register the virtual representation of the tangible item into the Internet virtual world.

[0003] The virtual representation may be a replica of, or similar to, the actual item.

SUMMARY

[0004] An interface for making customized item(s) is described, with a first part that uses the customization to form or order a tangible item, and a second part that uses the same customization to create or generate a virtual item that corresponds to the customized tangible item.

[0005] Another embodiment describes customization of avatars on two websites and use of the customized avatars in different ways on the two websites.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

- [0006] FIG. 1 shows a basic system diagram;
- [0007] FIG. 2 shows an exemplary flowchart of operation;
- [0008] FIG. 3 shows an exemplary flowchart of creating a special kind of customized item;
- [0009] FIGS. 4A and 4B represent an exemplary flowchart of the operation of creating and making a T-shirt;
- [0010] FIGS. 5A and 5B, respectively, demonstrate T-shirt maker interfaces for different websites;
- [0011] FIG. 6 shows an alternative or additional design screen of another embodiment;
- [0012] FIG. 7 shows an exemplary color palette;
- [0013] FIGS. 8A and 8B show color and shirt style selections, respectively;
- [0014] FIG. 9 shows an image select window;
- [0015] FIG. 10 illustrates another interface for viewing a selected pet on the shirt;
- [0016] FIG. 11 shows an exemplary text menu for adding text to shirt design;
- [0017] FIG. 12 shows a preview of the selected text on the shirt;
- [0018] FIG. 13 shows a completed product; and
- [0019] FIG. 14 demonstrates an order screen.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0020] FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment. In this embodiment, there is a basic website, shown as **100**, with at least one virtual character or avatar thereon. The avatars are shown as **102** and **104**. Each of the virtual characters **102**, **104** may have a different look that is recognizable and allows the user to distinguish between the different avatars, e.g., to determine one avatar **102** as being different from the other avatar **104**.

Characters on the website **100** may also have virtual rooms that are personal to the user. Virtual rooms such as **106** may have virtual furnishings such as **108**.

[0021] The characters **102**, **104** can be already on the website **100**, or can be added to the website **100** using a code such as described in our co-pending application. The code can be provided by a purchase, for example, one embodiment may require purchase of a tangible item, e.g., a toy or collectable item. The tangible item is packaged with a code that is usable on a website to create an avatar that resembles the tangible item.

[0022] In one embodiment, a user interface **112** may be sent over a network such as **113** to be displayed on a client computer. The code **110** is entered into a user interface **112** for the website **100**. Entry of a code such as **110** into the website **100** causes a character **102** or **104** to be displayed on the website **100**. The specific character **102** or **104** that is displayed is dependent on the code that has been entered. The codes **110** may be unique so that each code corresponds to one character and can be used only once.

[0023] Items for the virtual room **106**, such as the furnishings **108** and another item **122**, can be obtained in a number of different ways. The items can be purchased on the website **100**. The codes such as **110** can also be purchased on the website **100**. There can also be an E store, which may be another website that is associated with the website **100**. The E store, shown as **120**, allows purchasing items or codes directly. For example, the item **122** may have been purchased directly on the E store. The item **108** may have been purchased using a code **124**.

[0024] FIG. 2 illustrates a flow chart which may be carried out by a server computer **99** (see FIG. 1) that runs programs that create the virtual environment within the website **100**. **200** shows the general step of adding characters/items to the website **100**. As described above, **200** can use any technique that has been known in the art, including the technique of selling a tangible product that includes a code **110** that is entered into a computer to form a virtual representation of the tangible product, as in our copending U.S. publication number 20050177428, the entire contents of which are herewith incorporated by reference.

[0025] The items on the website, referred to herein as the avatar customization site, can be customized by a user so that their personal item is different than the generic item. For example, the user's avatar can be customized to have different clothing, different amounts of strength, different accessories such as eyeglasses, different shoes, different colors of items, etc. The avatar can be customized by adding an item that is purchased. For example, the item can be purchased, the user is given a code indicative of the item that has been purchased, and the code is entered into the computer. The entered code can form a customization for the avatar.

[0026] Once the avatar is registered, information about the avatar is stored in the user's account. The user can have multiple avatars in their account. The user can also interact with the avatar on the website **110** to take actions with the avatar, e.g., to feed the avatar, to move the avatar, etc. The health, happiness and hunger of the avatar can be managed via this interaction. The website can for example show the avatar's current health, happiness and hunger. These are examples of things that the user can do to virtually take care of the avatar. The user can take other actions to take care of the avatar.